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OBSERVATIONS

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ON THE

DISCOURSES

DELIVERED AT THE

ROYAL ACADEMY.

Addressed to the PRESIDENT.

L O N D O N:

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

DISCOVERY

OF THE

ROYAL



ACADEMY

OF THE

MILITARY

OF THE

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

THE person whom royal authority has appointed to preside as Prince and Director of his Academy, has thought it necessary, either for the instruction of the young students, incumbent upon him from his office, (but which of the two I shall take upon me to determine) to deliver annually upon the distribution of the prizes, a discourse upon the art of painting.

The first which he favoured the public with, contains little more than general hints, addressed to the young students, for the regulation of their conduct in the prosecution of their studies; at the same time acquainting them, that royal protection and favour will shine upon their happy endeavours.

He then tells them, that *the arts have begun to travel, and that their course has been observed to be westward*. How happy then are we, in having so excellent an *inn* provided for their reception? which we hope will be an inducement to them to make some stay in this country; for we can assure them, that nothing shall be wanting on our part, to make it as commodious and agreeable as possible: and lest the delicacy of these modish females should be disgusted, on a supposition of finding none but male attendants, we can assure them, there is a *sister* in the house, who will be happy to attend the Ladies, and see that no convenience be wanting to render their stay perfectly agreeable.

His style is pleasant, and conveys his sentiments in an easy manner; but it shall be my object to enquire, whether those sentiments are just,
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and how far they may be conducive to the instruction of those students over whom he is appointed to preside.

I have examined these discourses with attention and candour, and I cannot help declaring, that many principles therein laid down, must have, as I shall endeavour to prove, instead of instructing, the most pernicious consequences; a florid, easy style, tho' it has but little substance, nevertheless, and particularly to young and unexperienced minds, is often persuasive: In this light I consider the author's of these discourses, and whoever has been his *taylor*, proves himself, I think, (adopting his own phrase, and allowing *style, whether in words or colours, to be a power over materials*) a master in his art, and is, I may venture to affirm, more to be admired, for having adopted the *brilliancy of sunshine of Titian*, if I may be allowed his metaphor, than if he had chosen that *solemn twilight of the Bolognese master*, which he has so feelingly described, and which, I believe, no-body but himself can understand.

In his advice to the young students, he sets out with inculcating, a *strict obedience to the rules of art, as established by the practice of the great masters*; and that those works of genius which have stood the test of ages, should be considered by them as objects of their imitation, *not of their criticism*; so far I perfectly agree with him, and further he says, that they adhere strictly to the model, whether it be art or nature, that is placed before them; this likewise I conceive to be of the greatest consequence.

It appears that hitherto he would be understood to mean the beginners only; but in addressing himself to those who have made a further progress, we find *they may be allowed the liberty of ranging in a wider field, and expatiating at large, till the mind, warmed with its own enthusiastic fire, plays on the borders of the wildest extravagance.*

Let me ask, what this flowery path of declamation leads to whence it proceeds, and what it is to produce? The ancients, he tells

us, and backs his authority with some names of antiquity, produced their works, not from the study of nature; she, we are told, is imperfect, but from a kind of poetical, enthusiastic inspiration, of the same kind perhaps, but producing different effects, with that which the spirit, properly warmed, displays in the *Tabernacle*. Pliny or Cicero probably knew no more of the ideas and manner of thinking of Praxitiles and Phidias than we can be supposed to do; the latter having lived near as many ages before the former, as we have after them.

It is my design, therefore, to prove that this ingenious artist is inculcating doctrines, which he does not understand, and that such a rhapsody of nonsense, can have no other effect than to confound and mislead the young artist. This enthusiastic inspiration which abounded in the schools of ancient Greece, was admirably well adapted, I make no doubt, to the genius and disposition of those people; for as their subjects were for the most part, gods and divinities, so the means by which they were produced could not have been human, but divine; for how can we suppose, that a mere mortal imagination, unassisted by supernatural powers, could ever have the audacity to attempt to express a Jupiter armed with his thunder, ready to dart it on the rebellious giants, or an Apollo drawing his bow against the enormous Python? To attain this the sublime alone was not sufficient, they were obliged to call in greater aids; and no doubt, had they lived in our more modern days of ignorance and superstition, they would infallibly have lain under the same imputation with poor *Dr. Faustus*, of *dealing with the Devil*.

Allowing then, that the ancients produced their works by inspiration, let me ask, (as there are various kinds) what sort of inspiration it was they had recourse to? To me the flatulent appears the most probable; for we know that Flatus, that is wind, has a very extraordinary power over the machinery of many bodies; for instance, what is the use of a pair of bellows, unless inspired; the bagpipes the same? and *Hudibras*, talking of inspiration, says, that

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Wind

Wind in the hippocondriacks pent,
 Proved a f—t if downward sent;
 But if it upwards chance to fly,
 'Twas straight new light and prophecy.

So that if matters stood thus (and it is most natural to suppose they did) in the days of Phidias, it must have been a matter of doubt, upon the first emotions of the spirit, whether the artist should produce a *Jupiter* or a *F—t*.

Sir OBADIAH TWYLIGHT's *Invocation to the Deities of Taste*.

Ye omnipotent Gods, who in Heaven preside,
 Whose cares things immortal, and mortal divide,
 If above you've concerns that demand your attention,
 Give us leave for to ask, with great condescension,
 That you'll send us a deputy here for a while,
 To *inspire* our young lads, and teach 'em a style;
 But if what I ask,—*and 'tis what we all want*,
 Is a favour too great for your Godships to grant,
Let me, who preside in this very high station,
And am placed in this tub—for the good of the nation;
 Be filled with *poetical flatulent* fire,
 That with fancies sublime the mind shall inspire;
 That beauty and grace to canvas shall give,
 And spight of detraction bid merit to live.
 And grant me both wit and discernment to shew,
 How the Muses indulgent their favours bestow,
 That if taste and decorum together we join,
 Our works shall be thought not unworthy the Nine.
 But *Nature's* imperfect, by all 'tis confest,
 She's simple, she's awkward, she wants to be drest
 In poetical fustian: be she mine to compleat!
 From the crown of her head to the soles of her feet.
 To shew them how nature with art we'll assist,
 How Venus herself before she was kist,

*Made use of strange tricks, her complexion to mend,
Such tricks as we know to perfection must tend,
And which ye alone from Heaven can send.* }

But *Phyllis* this morning whom *Nature* has sent,
Wo'nt serve for a *Venus*, her knees are so bent,
Her nose must be half an inch shorter to make,
A Model, which I or *Ben Creole* would take.
Her bosom so fair, I vow and protest,
I thought would have done before 'twas undrest,
Her arms to reduce them to *Grecian* dimensions,
Must give up all title to *English* pretensions;
Her shoulders are round, and those haunches so sleek,
Are clumsy and thick, but we'll take off a steak.
And when she's compleated with exquisite taste,
I'll add a small trifle to Phyllis's waist.

But to return; whatever share inspiration and enthusiasm may have had in the productions of the ancient Greeks, it shall be my endeavour to account for them upon other principles, principles more consonant to reason and common sense; I mean nature and fine taste. Let us but examine into the history of the Greeks, and we shall find, that they enjoyed greater natural advantages both of body and mind, than any other people whatever; their persons, both men and women, were endowed with all the beauty that the human form was capable of; their manner of life, modes of education, public exercises and employments, gave the artist the most favourable opportunities of studying and contemplating the human body, and that too in its highest degree of perfection; the countenances even of the lowest peasants were composed of the most beautiful features. Add to this their very gait and air, had so much of dignity and ease, that the mind perpetually habituated to what was truly beautiful and sublime could not fail of producing the most exquisite forms; artists thus born and educated, no wonder their success should go hand in hand with their endeavours. They had beauty all round them, and on every side, wherever they went, their ideas were never diverted from

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from this lovely object ; strangers to deformity, their taste and judgment were confirmed upon the most solid principles of the art.

It is evident then, that Nature was the school in which they studied ; to her, and to her alone were they indebted ; their uncommon penetration and discernment taught them how to select and apply these beauties to their greatest advantage : under such happy circumstances, can we suppose they stood in need of further assistance ; Nature furnished them with examples ; a constant emulation and desire to excel, joined to the most consummate judgment, brought to perfection those wonders which have stood the test of ages ; and that very Nature, which in the earliest times, diffused itself with so much lustre amongst the ancient Greeks, still continues to shine with the same force ; and whoever has been at all conversant with the present race of these people, will find the same acuteness, the same beauty and dignity of countenance, the same abilities that were so conspicuous amongst their illustrious ancestors.

Considering things in this light, we need be no longer at a loss to account for the sublime character that is stamped upon all their works, without having recourse to inspiration, enthusiasm, and God knows what besides ; for our hero, had he been a cotemporary, perhaps, might have been told, that the Jupiter of Phidias, and the Venus of Praxiteles, were nothing more than portraits of their respective wife and father ; and that the Bacchus was the very picture of the landlord of the Three Tuns at Rhodes. It is likewise evident that this beauty which shines with so much force and lustre amongst the Greeks, diffuses itself with fainter rays over the rest of Europe ; and Italy, as it is nearest in situation, seems to partake of the greatest share of this blessing. The inhabitants of a great part of that country (and particularly in the neighbourhood of Rome) are distinguished by a certain air of dignity that engages the attention of every stranger ; may we not then venture to affirm, that even Raphael himself was as much indebted for his superior excellencies to the school of Nature, as the Greeks themselves were ?

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The richest soils produce, if neglected, the rankest weeds. *Pietro* *est* is a remarkable instance of the truth of this; the rapidity of whose genius, not permitting him to stoop to the slavish drudgery of the art, but giving loose to the whimsical caprices of a wild imagination, was the only reason that prevented his shining with that lustre in the annals of painting, which such a genius deserved; and which, had it been cultivated by a proper study of nature, would have produced works of the very first class: be cautious then of disgusting the young student, and alienating his mind from this object, for imperfect as she is represented, she must be his guide and model. *Inspiration* has long ago ceased, we must be contented to work with coarser materials, or else we may assure ourselves, that our productions will vanish, and like the baseless fabrick of a vision, leave not a wreck behind."

We are told, that *Poussin* thought, "that a particular attention to colouring was an obstacle to the student, in his progress to the great end and design of the art, and that he who attaches himself to this principal end, will acquire by practice a reasonable good method of colouring. But let me ask, why the author of these Discourses has chosen to quote the practice of a man, who, tho' excellent in every other branch of painting, has most evidently failed in that of colouring, more than perhaps any other of the great masters? We find, in the course of these lectures, that colouring may be studied upon two principles, both very different from each other, yet both producing their effect: the one as was the practice of the Bolognese School, by reducing it to little more than *Chiaro Oscuro*; the other as was that of Florence and Rome, which consisted in strong and unbroken colours, and which from their simplicity, produced a grand manner. The former of these we will call the *dingey*, or *sub-fusk*; a term, which in my opinion, corresponds exactly to the idea he gives us of that manner, as I shall endeavour to shew, and which explains perfectly what he means by the *solemn twilight* of painting, which agreeing admirably with grave and serious subjects, goes hand in hand with the artist, in disposing the mind, to receive with awe and reverence, those impressions, which scenes of this

this kind may be supposed to stamp upon it. This (for, at the same time, we are to suppose he understands the other perfectly) is, as we may judge from his works, the style of colouring he has himself adopted, and which, he must be allowed, to have carried to the highest degree of perfection. The latter, replete with *monotony*, (than which certainly *nothing can be more simple*) effects the mind, we may presume like the *harmonious, unharmonic harmony of martial musick*, which, as we are told by this ingenious artist, *from its quick transitions, strikes the mind, perhaps, more forcibly for their not being any union between them. For this rouses the soul, and transports it to the borders of the wildest extravagance.* The ideas thus warmed, are ripe for the sublimest subjects.

I see no reason, then, for recommending to the young students a journey into Italy, when their views may be accomplished to their satisfaction in their own country, and in their own *metropolis*; these two great systems of colouring, being there practised in the greatest perfection, and according as the disposition and genius of the students may incline, *he himself* can instruct them in the former, and the *Herald Office* displays the most perfect examples of the latter; both in their different natures, we find adapted to the great and capital path of painting—The *Epic*; for in this our *ancient school*, the *Epic*, the noblest of all the paths of painting, may be studied in its original perfection, and we find, upon examination, their principles of colouring agreeing exactly with those, we are told, this branch of the art requires, and which likewise, the Florentine have happily excelled in; both the systems consisting of *simple and unbroken colours*, which produce a *grand and noble effect*. And though the ideas of our *ancient college*, are oftentimes expressed in a dark and symbolical manner, yet we know, that they always allude to some great and interesting event. This school too delights in *antiquity*, but we find it not prejudiced, to the exclusion of modern merit, and the achievements of a *yesterday's hero*, are full of being recorded in this celebrated gallery.

This is the *epic*—this is the style by which we may suppose the inspired artists of antiquity acquired immortal reputation; who, knowing that sublimity was only to be expressed by simplicity, let the subject be what it would, whether *a divinity for a temple, or a sign for an alehouse*, never lost sight of this great object. *They knew*, I make no doubt, *from experience*, that the *delicacy and subtile variety of nature*, as we have seen *her presumptuously attempted* by *Titian, Rubens*, and our more modern daubers, served only to destroy the effect which painting was intended to produce; and I am inclined to believe this, for we know, that in the early ages of these *inspired* people, the art of colouring was practised upon the most simple principles, *black and white*. How truly commendable then is he, who endeavours to bring back the deluded moderns to primitive perfection? And may the laurels which this illustrious artist has so 'deservedly acquired, prove excitements to the tender plants over whom he presides! The invention and happy progress of letters too, which we have the satisfaction of seeing in general use in these present times, may likewise prove of the utmost consequence to painters of this class; for, by the help of these, their wish may be fully accomplished, by following the method practised by an ingenious itinerant artist, who doubting the penetration of some of his admirers, had recourse to the plain, but simple stratagem, of writing under his work, what he intended it should represent; as for instance, this is *the sign of the Bear and Ragged Staff*; this is *the Bird in Hand*, &c. &c. This, tho' it could not inspire us with any great idea of the artist's merit, yet certainly it proved with what diffidence he exhibited his works to the public.

We must suppose that the *Knight* became struck with the *unharmonic harmony*, of *the grand and simple style*, (for as I have observed he practices the *sub-fusk*) from the moment that his *inspired* foreboding mind, gave him intimations of those honours, which we have seen so deservedly showered upon him, and imitating the example of *Philopæmen, the wise General*, he determined not to be unprepared against the hour that chivalry was to come upon him; and it matters little
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in which school of the celebrated college he established his ideas, (for they all proceed upon the same) whether *Garter principal, Clarencieux, or Norroy Kings of Arms*, furnished him with *the illustrious badge*, which must, whilst living, add a lustre to his *other honours*; for without it *honour is no honour*, and which when dead, will remain to his posterity, a monument of everlasting glory.

Let me advise him to follow the example of some eminent painters, who used for the benefit of their pupils, to hang up in their painting room, a piece of their juvenile performance, by way of excitement; and if he is so inclined, I can assure him, that the western parts of this kingdom, can furnish him with as many specimens of this kind as he pleases. And let me further intreat him, to add thereto a piece of his more modern performance; this shall have an effect of a different nature, this shall read a lecture of morality to his new born idols, lest, in *the vanity of their hearts they should exclaim, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of us*; and we will subjoin thereto, these true but humbling lines,

*As ye are now, so once was I,
As I am now, so ye shall be;
For mortal things are doom'd to die,
Therefore prepare to follow me.*

Amusing myself the other day in a solitary ramble, my ears were on a sudden saluted with the sound of a very uncommon musical instrument; my curiosity led me to the place from whence it proceeded, when to my surprise, I discovered * *three men moving, in strange fantastical habits, their countenances horribly distorted, and their gestures so absurdly ridiculous*, that it was with difficulty I could refrain from laughter. The *instrument* to which they moved (for it was not dancing) was so singular, that I was induced to make some inquiries about it; the performer was, as I found by his discourse, not a *regular bred musician*,

* These were, as I found, the three principal dancers of the age.

sician, but one of those kind of gentry, (tho' in a different path) that answers to what the Italians call a *Ciarlatano*, and we in plain English a *quack*. The *instrument* he called the *Macgilp*; he said it had wonderful powers, and that it had been in great vogue *about two centuries ago*, but that no-body now but himself understood its use; that he had happily revived it, and he made no doubt, but that when he had spread its fame, every other *instrument* would fall before it. It immediately struck me, that the *martial-music*, which I have before mentioned, must have been produced by *this instrument*, and what confirms me in this opinion is, the effects attributed to that (which I was then so much at a loss to account for) were exactly the same as produced by this, viz. that of *animating and rousing the soul*; this was evident by the *faces and gestures* of the *dancers*. The performer told me, that the *instrument* had besides this wonderful property, that those who understood its powers, needed no other qualifications to become adepts in the *art of dancing*. I thought it all extreme strange, and not being able to reconcile their principles to reason and common sense, I shut the door and pursued my walk.

But to return: we can't be surpris'd that a man, whose ideas of colouring are grounded upon twy-light and Chiaro Oscuro should censure the Venetian school; but let me advise him to be cautious of advancing doctrines so very opposite to every established principle of nature and common sense; let him be aware, that he is holding up a page that shall stand in judgment against him, when *private prejudices*, and all *local, self-interested* abuse, and even his own works, shall be no more.

The fourth discourse, which treats more particularly of colouring, is full of the grossest and most incoherent absurdities, and had we not the evidence of his own practice, we should suppose too ridiculous to be imposed upon the public; for shall a man who lays claim to the name of painter, dare to advance it as his opinion, that the effect produced by the most consummate harmony of colouring (for such I esteem the Venetian) serves to no other purpose than to frustrate the great end

of the art, which is, as he says, to animate and rouse the soul; and that this school of colouring, which has stood the test, and merited the approbation of ages, is totally *incompatible with the* principles of a perfect *Painter*; or that *Titian would have painted better, had he painted worse?* He has gone further, and even recommended in this branch of the art, the example of a school, whose principles of colouring (if they ever had any) are as diametrically opposite to truth and nature, as his doctrines are to reason and good sense, I mean the *Florentine*; and fraught with these notions, he has even advanced, that the *mind is perhaps more forcibly struck by the want of union*. This I grant possible; but in what manner is it struck? as we may suppose it to be by the sight of any offensive, disagreeable object. And to his disgrace, let him think it, that he is himself, (who, we are to look upon, as the guide and light of this academy) to be informed, by an obscure, unknown pen, that union and harmony (which I consider as synonymous terms) are the very essence and soul of painting; for, if there is harmony and union in propriety of action; if there is harmony and union in truth of composition, and both are essentially necessary to the perfection of painting; so let me assure him, that union and harmony of colours are as essential; and that without it, his productions will only resemble the party-coloured jumble of a *merry-andrew's coat*. He is likewise to be informed, that union and harmony of sound, are as necessary to produce the effect which musick requires, and that without harmony, there can be no musick; in the one instance the ear is the judge, in the other the eye; and as the want of it will offend in the one, so must it likewise in the other. What then does he mean by *Twy-light* and *Chiaro Oscuro*? What? but to enforce by it that practice he himself has adopted. Such doctrines can only proceed from a low groveling mind; a mind, that, as it is incapable of comprehending or relishing all the different branches of the art, has recourse to the basest of all stratagems, vilifying what it does not understand.

The *Roman*, *Bolognese*, and *Venetian* schools, have each had their separate pursuits, and each may be said to have excelled in them; and

as I am confident that the *Venetians* would have drawn better, had they been able, so am I that the *Romans and Bolognese* would have coloured better from the same motives.

Raphael, Michael Angelo, Titian, and the *Carracci's*, the heads of the four great schools of painting, have acquired their reputation, each by their respective excellencies, all of them different from each other. Let us examine into the merits of these great masters, and we shall find they have none of them arrived at the summit of perfection, which tho' indeed unattainable, yet is laudable to attempt, we shall then see that each in his separate walk has contributed greatly towards it; and tho' unsuccessful, they have, like *Phaeton*, greatly fallen.

I am not idiot enough to believe, that painting derives no lustre or advantage from the most consummate harmony of colours, or that it is incompatible with the great end of the art; and I think that *Titian*, when he was reprov'd by *Michael Angelo*, for not designing better, might have retorted upon this great man, for not colouring better; he might even have gone further, and advis'd him to have introduced gentlemen into his pictures, instead of porters. The ideas of *Michael Angelo*, were of the sublimest kind, and he has sometimes express'd them well; but surely that man is reprehensible, who gives us a *Hercules*, when we should have an *Apollo*. I am not insensible to the merits of this great master, I allow him all; I have studied with care and attention his most capital work, (and indeed the only one by which we can judge of him as a painter) I mean *the Capella Sistina*, in the *Vatican*, and consider it as a work abounding with numberless excellencies; but at the same time that I admire his conceptions, I cannot help thinking that the artist was as desirous of shewing his superior skill in the mechanism and contortions of the human body, as *Titian* and *Paul Veronese* have been in shewing their knowledge in the *flut*ter and extravagance of their harmonious colouring.

Raphael, whose merits as a painter I place above censure, had judgment and penetration enough to temper the severity and extravagance
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of his rival, and turn them to the greatest advantage; but the world has produced few geniuses of this cast; it is the Bee only that can gather honey from every flower; this great master saw the necessity of fine colouring; that he understood and practised it, we have the evidence of his works; and whoever will examine the *Transfiguration*, and some other of his pictures, will find proofs of his abilities in this branch of the art, that would do honour even to the pencil of *Titian*.

The genius of *Michael Angelo* I consider of such a kind, as to be studied with the utmost care, and that nothing but the deepest reflection can turn him to any advantage. Sir J——a would have done well, I think, in recommending him to the young student, to have pointed out to him in what manner he ought to be studied; for as there is no man whose ideas and conceptions are more elevated and sublime, so there is no man more proper to raise those sentiments, in the mind of the young artist, that lead to the noblest ends of painting; but the difficulty is in properly distinguishing where these beauties lie. They are to be chosen with a partial eye, otherwise extravagance may be mistaken for beauty, and caricatura for character and expression.

The *Carracci's*, and particularly *Annibal*, seem best to have understood and dived into the principles of this great man, as may be seen by their works, and the *Farnese Gallery* alone sufficiently shews what use he has made of him. He has there studied him, not as a servile copyist, but like a great master, by rousing that fire, which has produced one of the noblest works the art of painting can boast of. This is the light in which I see *Michael Angelo*, and in him, I must confess, I am more struck with the mind that conceived, than the hand that executed; the former is often sublime, when the latter is caricatura.

I shall conclude with considering how far the *Venetians* have deserved the censure that has been thrown upon them; and how far their excellencies are incompatible with the great ends of painting. It is but reasonable

reasonable to ask what Sir J——a has seen of, and where he has studied this school? Has he gone to the fountain head? Has he surrounded his ideas of their imperfections, from their most capital works? Has he studied with attention and candour, the *Martyrdom of Pietro Martyre*, in the convent of *St. Giovanni and Paolo*? The *Assumption of the Virgin* at the high altar, in the Church of the *Frari* at Venice? The same subject in the Cathedral of *Verona*, by *Titian*? The *Europa*, and many of the ceilings in the *Doge's Palace*, and several altar pieces in the churches at Venice, by *Paul Veronese*? The organ doors of the *Maddalena del Orto*, and the *Frescos* of the *Tosetti Palace*, in the same city, by *Tintoret*? If he has, let him acquit his judgment; let him with candour confess, and it can be no disgrace to him, that these are works, that will stand in competition with any thing that the schools of *Rome* and *Bologna* ever produced; and let him then acknowledge, that fine colouring, is not incompatible with the noblest paths of painting.

My idea of the duty of a painter is, (however I may be deceived) to represent his scenes, and particularly what relates to colouring, as perfect and as near to Nature as possible; nor will I adopt the sentiments of any man that shall declare, that a November fog, (which I conceive to be the same thing in nature, as the *twilight* system is in painting) can throw an additional lustre upon any scene; and let me ask, (supposing ourselves spectators of those transactions) would the *Transfiguration*, or the *Communion of St. Jerome*, have been beheld with a greater degree of beauty thro' such a medium? Or that those enchanting scenes, which have been so happily attempted and executed by *Claude Lorraine*, would have been properer subjects for the pencil, had that Sun, to which they owe their force and glory been obscured by *mist* and *vapour*.

Let it not be supposed from hence, that I am prejudiced in favour of the Venetians, any further than as I think they merit it, to the exclusion of the other schools; I am only sorry to find, that in an age, and in a country, wherein we have flattered ourselves (but whether

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presumptuously or not I cannot pretend to determine) that this noble art is upon the point of raising its drooping head, and visiting us who have hitherto passed as it were unnoticed by its enlivening ray; I am sorry, I say, that a school so eminently distinguished as that of Venice, should, at so critical a moment, stand in need of a champion to vindicate its merits; the enforcement of which must have had more weight, and done more honour, as proceeding from him who stands forth the Prince and Director of this academy, than from the obscure, unknown pen, of an obscure, unknown critic. The young artist should be taught to consider the different schools, as uniting their different excellencies to form the perfect painter; and that he who has this object in view, should look upon himself as unchained, unprejudiced to the particular manners, of any particular school or master; he should learn to select what is excellent, and to reject what is vicious in them all; and it was incumbent upon him who is thus become his instructor, to have pointed out to him, with candour and impartiality, the merits of these different schools; to have shewn him wherein they have failed, wherein they have excelled: that when his taste being confirmed and made perfect by instruction and experience he might then be at liberty to expatiate free and uncontrouled over this ample field of knowledge; and that a mind thus formed, would only dwell upon the flowers of taste and elegance, and gather their sweets looking down with contempt and derision, on the gay, deceitful path of *wild extravagance*.

In this country there is a liberty to censure, or commend: And when we have seen the sacred person of Majesty itself, become subject to this liberty, shall we spare *him*, who is advancing doctrines which tend to the utter abolition, of one of the principal branches of the art of painting-Colouring? *He rejects the Venetian for being replete with harmony: He recommends the Florentine for the want of it: He recommends the Bolognese for reducing its maxims to Twylight and Chiaro Oscuro*; and may we not likewise suppose, that at the same time he could hope to enforce his own?

It is my sincere wish, that he may continue to tread the paths of honour unrivalled ; and that he shall think it beneath the dignity of an artist, of a *President of a Royal Academy*, to become the *oracle of an auction-room* ; where dirty, *self-interested panegyrick*, or abuse, as occasion requires, join hand in hand in deceiving the unwary publick ; nor let detraction and envy poison that tongue, from whence we should expect instruction and advice ; and, when ignorance cannot approve, let not malevolence condemn, but rather let him give a nod of silent approbation, on the merits of our illustrious predecessors ; nor let him call the picture bad, because its excellencies are beyond his comprehension.

Whatever may be the success of this institution, the Royal Protector and encourager of it, undoubtedly deserves our sincerest thanks : He is not accountable for its progress ; and let it be our duty, to render him due acknowledgments, for the support and protection of an art, whose chief and principal end is to civilize and polish mankind.

How far these sentiments may be agreeable to reason, I must leave to the judgment and candour of the world to determine ; I can only say, and I think it right so to do, that nothing but a sincere wish for the advancement of so noble an art, has led me to give them to the public ; and that neither prejudice nor resentment induced me to attempt a confutation of some principles (for I think they contain many excellent ones) delivered in these discourses : and I can with the greatest truth affirm, that I have not even a personal knowledge of the author of them.

F I N I S.

It is my sincere wish, that he may continue to tread the paths of ho-
 nest unswerving; and that he shall think it beneath the dignity of an
 artist, of a President of a Royal Academy, to become the crutch of an
 author; who, by his own hands, is deceiving the many public;
 not let detraction and envy poison that tongue, from whence we should
 expect instruction and advice; and, when ignorance cannot approve,
 let not malice condemn; but rather let him give a nod of silent
 approbation, on the merits of our illustrious predecessors; nor let him
 call the picture bad, because its excellencies are beyond his compre-
 hension.

Whatever may be the result of this institution, the Royal Professor
 and Laureate of it, will be the first to receive our thanks: He is
 not accountable for its progress; and let it be our duty, to render him
 our acknowledgments, for the support and patronage of an art, whose
 chief and principal end is to civilize and refine mankind.

If we for these sentiments may be regarded as too narrow, I must leave
 to the judgment and candour of the world to determine; I can only
 say, and I think it right to say, that I am a sincere wish for
 the advancement of the noble art, and to give them to the
 public; and that neither prejudice nor resentment induced me to at-
 tempt a contradiction of these principles (for I think they contain many
 excellent ones) delivered in these discourses; and I can with the
 most perfect truth affirm, that I have not even a partial knowledge of the
 author of them.



